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A SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE

UNIVERSITY

OF

CAMBRIDGE.

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SERMON

PREACHED AT ST. MARY's CHURCH,

IN CAMBRIDGE,

AT THE LENT ASSIZES, 1766,

BEFORE

THE HONOURABLE SIR RICHARD ADAMS,

ONE OF THE BARONS OF THE EXCHEQUER.

BY

JOHN MAINWARING, B. D.

FELLOW OF ST. JOHN's COLLEGE.

LONDON,

PRINTED FOR BENJAMIN WHITE, AT
HORACE's HEAD, FLEET-STREET,
AND MESS. THURLBOURN AND
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[TO]

The Reverend Doctor POWELL, Maſter of St. John's College, and Vice-Chancellor of the Univerſity of *Cambridge*.

SIR,

YOUR friendly partiality gave riſe to the Diſcourſe, which You are now requeſted to take under your protection. It is not my intention in this addreſs to offer You any ſtudied compliments. Neither your merits, nor the judgment of the world concerning them, ſtand in need of any aſſiſtance from me. But gratitude is fond of ſpeaking on every occaſion; and, at this time, public reaſons are not wanting, ſufficient to juſtify its warmeſt expreſſions. A regard for the Univerſity

and

and College, with which I have been ſo long, and ſo happily connected, obliges me to wiſh You health and honor. What elſe, Sir, can I wiſh You, unleſs it be, what ſurely you muſt have?--- the ſincere ſuffrages of thoſe, whoſe intereſts are the ſame with yours, and whoſe concurrence may be neceſſary to the ſucceſs of your generous labours; uniformly exerted in the ſupport of our common cauſe, the promotion of learning and diſcipline. I am, with great reſpect and eſteem,

Sir,

Your Moſt oblig'd

and

Moſt obedient Servant,

JOHN MAINWARING.

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourſelves——

Rom. xii. 19.

THE creatures which are ranged in the lower claſſes of exiſtence, are found to purſue the purpoſes of their nature with an almoſt unerring conſtancy and regularity. Every principle, ſubſiſting in its due force, equally free from exceſs or defect, has an orderly movement, an uniform and beneficial direction.

VERY different from this is the ſtate of man, a free and intelligent being, in whom high moral capacities are added to ſtrong animal propenſities. Tho' none of theſe are faulty in themſelves, all are liable to be perverted; not more indeed than that principle, which, from its rank, has a right to

preſide, and whoſe office it is to prevent or correct the perverſion of the reſt. Sad as our caſe may ſeem, this grievance, the ground of ſcornful and impious objections, is unavoidably connected with the nobleſt and moſt valuable privileges of our nature. It is but a kind of tax we pay for its ſuperiority. Had it fewer marks of nobility, it would be leſs liable to be debas'd. Moral benefits, like thoſe of a civil and political ſort, muſt be enjoyed on the terms allotted; — ſubject to ſome riſque; dependent on the temper and character of ſuch as enjoy them. In the beſt conſtitutions of government, the proviſions made for the ſecurity of liberty, afford temptations and opportunities to the factious. Yet who would exchange the turbulent intervals experienc'd in ſuch governments, for the dead tranquillity of an eſtabliſhed ſervitude? Juſt ſo, the diſadvantages of our *nature* are owing, in part, to its excellence. And how amply are they compenſated in another view? For, not to inſiſt on the merit acquir'd by the command we are capable of exerciſing over ourſelves; that very ſtrength of the paſſions which lays

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us ſo open to vice and error, may be employed on the ſide of virtue, and greatly aſſiſt us in the ſearch of truth. Even when the contrary happens; — when the movements of the mind are moſt faulty and irregular; they ſtill anſwer the intentions of providence; ſtill ſerve to carry on the great ends of probation and diſcipline.

THUS we ſee, that the cauſes of corruption are, from the unalterable nature of things, intimately blended with the means of perfection; — a point, that, if properly purſued thro' all its conſequences, might poſſibly tend to remove that thick darkneſs, in which ſome of the moſt intereſting queſtions of philoſophy are yet involv'd; and at the ſame time furniſh an anſwer ſufficient to ſhame and ſilence the revilers of their own ſpecies. In oppoſition to their calumnies, grounded on partial and imperfect views, or on facts unconnected and merely caſual, we may venture to pronounce of man's nature, what the Prophet ſays of the creation at large, that it is very good.

I SHALL exemplify this reaſoning by applying it to the principle, which the ſubject before us offers to our attention.

RESENTMENT reſolves itſelf into anger, which has for its object natural harm, or injuries;—and into indignation, which is excited by vice or wickedneſs, and ſome ſorts of folly and meanneſs.

THE angry emotions which ariſe within us on the mere feeling of natural harm, or on the receipt of injuries, are a great ſecurity to individuals, by inciting them to avoid the one, and repel the other. And, in our ſocial commerce, whether of the more confin'd, or extended ſort, the diſdainful ſenſe we have of what is wicked, baſe, or highly indecorous, is equally ſerviceable.

MEEKNESS, beyond certain limits, is tameneſs, or puſillanimity. And when we are no way attacked ourſelves, we may have ſtrong reaſons to be indignant, and to *expreſs* our indignation. There are many acts of ſo bad a quality, that whoever be the objects,

or the authors of 'em, they ought to be ſtigmatiz'd. As much as noble and generous actions are entitled to eſteem, *they* demand deteſtation.

Were it not for theſe two principles of anger and indignation, the laws of private intercourſe would often have neither ſanction, nor ſupport. The violation of them would be ſafer, and conſequently more frequent than it is. The bad would be doubly audacious; and the virtuous part of ſociety want a defence, which the public wiſdom could not ſupply.

But tho' reſentment, conſider'd as a part of our nature, be far from an imperfection, yet the irregularities of it are extremely faulty and pernicious.

The corruptions of anger, are, rage and hatred. Revenge is compounded of both. The poſſibility of their ſubſiſtence in the ſame perſon, cannot indeed be denied; but where the ſenſe of injuries is ſtrong and lively, it is ſeldom fix'd and laſting.

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THE *ſtrength* of anger depends partly on the frame of mind, and partly on the influence of education. It is uſually greateſt in thoſe, who are either too exalted for the controul of authority, or too low for the opportunities of inſtruction. It is particularly obſervable in cowards and in tyrants, who fearing much, or having much to fear, are ever liable to thoſe jealouſies and alarms, which produce, or augment the flame.

AND well indeed it would be, were immoderate anger *confin'd* to ſuch perſons. Alas! even the beſt and braveſt it has ſubdued in their turn. What act the moſt cruel, the moſt oppreſſive, may not the friendly and humane commit in the paroxyſms of a paſſion, that, while it is purſuing its hoſtile purpoſes, utterly excludes all thought or reflection?

OF ſuch importance is the *degree* to which anger may riſe. But the other circumſtance is of greater yet; I mean its *duration*.

WHEN

When it either doth not appear by any viſible tokens, or is directly contradicted by appearances, it forms the moſt improv'd and elaborate treachery; — that which the Pſalmiſt deſcribes ſo feelingly, "For it was not an open enemy that hath done me this diſhonour; for then I could have born it" — Sad indeed it is to have any concern with hypocrites of whatever ſort; but the moſt dangerous and peſtilent are thoſe, who counterfeit friendſhip in order to accompliſh the purpoſes of hatred. The placid ſerenity with which ſome men receive offences, too much reſembles that ſtillneſs of the air when it harbours in its boſom the ſeeds of deſtructive tempeſts. Their ſelf-command reaches not beyond the countenance and mien. The wounds which intereſt or ambition teaches them to conceal, not only remain, but grow worſe and worſe: while they ſeem to be heal'd, they are ſuffer'd to feſter and ulcerate. Under all this outward diſcipline, the temper is deeply corrupted. It never can return to its ſound ſtate. "Immortale odium, & nunquam ſanabile vulnus!"

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The *occaſions* of enmity muſt needs be the moſt frequent where there is the greateſt oppoſition of intereſts or opinions. It is to be hop'd however, that the more flagrant *inſtances* of it are not very common even among the candidates for fame, or the rivals for power and popularity. But admitting they *were*, they could never prove that to be a natural paſſion, which is the utmoſt depravation of nature. The ſocial, the kind, the *truly* natural affections muſt be eradicated, before men can arrive at that perfection of enmity, which renders them implacable; which cancels the remembrance of all relations and ties, while it preſerves and perpetuates that of faults and offences.

In ſome countries the paſſions of men, like the fruits of the earth, are found exalted to a high degree. *There* too the corruption of any paſſion is attended with a ſuitable malignancy. When other cauſes conſpire with this influence of the climate, when, thro' ſuperſtition and falſe philoſophy, extravagant opinions are added to inveterate habits; we need not be much ſurpris'd, if

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in whole nations the moſt natural feelings and affections of humanity are renounc'd and abandon'd. Utter ſtrangers to all the methods of amicable deciſion, the animoſities which accident or ill behaviour may kindle, they feed with the fuel of freſh injuries, and maintain to their lateſt breath. Nay, as if the life of man allow'd not ſufficient room for the exerciſe of hatred, when the parties themſelves are no more, it ſtill ſubſiſts: it goes of courſe, as a part of the inheritance, to the next of kin; in *this* article but mere truſtees for ſucceeding heirs, alike engaged in their turn, to tranſmit the venom, with unimpair'd vigor, to the remoteſt deſcendants. How muſt the peace of ſociety ſuffer, how muſt the miſeries of life be multiplied, by ſuch a terrible traffic in acts of hoſtility and perſecution?

One would think that *ſuch* accounts of the manners of remote nations might force even infidels to applaud that zeal, which is impatient to render univerſal a religion, by their own confeſſion, benevolent in a high degree.

We have ſeen that no natural paſſion is without its uſe, and have ſhewn ſome of the uſes of anger, as implanted in man.

Society hath alſo its reſentments. They are of two ſorts, — reſpecting foreigners who invade its *rights*, and natives who tranſgreſs its *laws*.

When the quiet of a nation is threaten'd or diſturb'd; when its ſubjects or allies are eſſentially injur'd in their perſons or their property; when the faith of treaties is openly violated, or their ſolemn obligations eluded by artifice and fraud; if reaſonable compenſation be not made, if ſecurity cannot be obtain'd, and there be no proſpect of compromiſing matters on terms conſiſtent with the dignity of the offended party; — in ſuch a caſe, acts of hoſtility are but the exertions of power for the maintenance of right. It is true, Chriſtianity contains no expreſs directions for the conduct of nations under ſuch circumſtances. It leaves them to the laws of natural juſtice, to the wiſdom and virtue of their reſpective governors.

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But human prudence is never ſo rightly, never ſo ſucceſsfully exerted in the art of governing, as while it keeps in view the mild morality of the Goſpel precepts. Nor can any thing be of higher conſequence to the welfare of a ſtate, than that its reſentments ſhould be properly plac'd, and wiſely directed. But was this ever known to be the caſe with conquerors by profeſſion? Such were the people to whom St. Paul addreſſes the Epiſtle from whence the ſubject is taken. The ſavage prejudices by which they were guided, had gradually grown up with their greatneſs, and were interwoven with their plan of policy. Indeed, a falſe ambition knows no reſtraints either of juſtice or humanity. All who had any thing to loſe, and refus'd to ſurrender it, were offenders againſt the majeſty of the ſtate, enemies of courſe, and objects of its vengeance. The private virtues of ſome particular commanders, are no exception to this account of the national character. We are indeed the more charm'd with that *clemency* in the firſt and greateſt of the Cæſars, which gives a double luſtre to his talents, and might al-

moſt ſeem to attone for his crimes. "Oblivi-ſci nihil ſoles, niſi injurias," — tho' pronounced by an Orator, was no rhetorical exaggeration, but the language of truth, as well as gratitude. Such a teſtimony derives a greater value from the ſituation of the perſon to whom it was offer'd. The owners of an uſurp'd authority are ſeldom undiſturb'd in the poſſeſſion, and every inſtance of oppoſition is a freſh temptation to cruelty: — a vice, which hath conſign'd to eternal infamy ſome of the ſucceeding Emperors, eſpecially him, to whoſe brutal fury St. Paul himself fell a ſacrifice.

The firſt object of the Apoſtle was, to *humanize* his converts, to wean them from their *ſanguinary* maxims, to reduce them to the plain principles of juſtice and equity; and thus prepare them for thoſe higher graces and perfections, which the Author of the new religion had both enjoin'd and exemplified.

The other objects of the public reſentment, are thoſe who tranſgreſs the laws.

Not

Not only the general ſafety and welfare, but the good of the offender himſelf requires that crimes ſhou'd be puniſh'd.

Among a people ill-ſecur'd in their property, or often moleſted in the enjoyment of it, even the honeſt would be diſcouraged from induſtry; and the diſhoneſt embolden'd by remiſſneſs or impunity would proceed to more and greater outrages.

But the perfect conſiſtency of reſentment with benevolence, will be ſtill clearer, when we conſider it as excited by injuries of a more extenſive nature.

Reason alone would ſhew the neceſſity of judicial puniſhments, and were it as eaſy to execute, as it is to ordain them, might leſs ſtand in need of aſſiſtance from the warm and active principle, which is the ſubject of our enquiry. But the courſe of juſtice may be obſtructed, and its ends defeated by a multitude of cauſes. Crimes require to be prov'd before they can be puniſhed;

niſhed; many muſt be *publicly produc'd* before they can be prov'd. Some of the worſt would remain a ſecret, or if known, would not be prov'd; or if even they were prov'd, would never be effectually puniſh'd, but that they raiſe to its higheſt pitch that generous abhorrence, which all villainy produces in ſome degree. He, who ſuſtain'd the various character of ſtateſman, magiſtrate, and prophet, appeals to his ſtrong reſentments as proofs of his piety. "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee, and am not I grieved with thoſe that riſe up againſt thee? Yea, I hate them right ſore, as tho' they were mine enemies." But vain were the wiſdom of laws and vigilance of magiſtrates, unleſs the people, warm'd with the ſame virtuous antipathies*, lend their aid to ſuppreſs crimes by

* The irregularities of *indignation*, tho' a part of the plan, would have led us too far from the *occaſion*, of the Diſcourſe. It may be proper however, to obſerve here, that the cauſe of thoſe irregularities, is, *too quick a ſenſe of virtue*. Such a ſenſe, amiable as it is, may be hurtful in many ways. It nouriſhes melancholy, by deſtroying that inward repoſe and complacency, which are the preſent rewards of pure intentions. It favours moroſeneſs, by obſtructing the right exerciſe and improvement of the ſocial

by detecting their authors, and bringing them to juſtice. This general concurrence in ſupport of the ſtate, is the more neceſſary, becauſe, in the wiſeſt laws, the ſcrupulous precautions obſerv'd in favour of innocence, render it leſs difficult for the guilty to eſcape. But if all were as zealous to avenge the ſtate, as moſt men are to avenge themſelves, the dreadful examples of public juſtice would be much fewer than they are.

The moſt *confin'd* compaſſion, by ſparing ſuch perſons, defeats its own purpoſes. Every other conſideration forbids ſuch lenity. It is one of the cleareſt maxims reſulting from the nature and ends of ſocial union, and civil dominion, that all particular intereſts or regards ſhould give place to the general welfare. It is equally clear that every one who receives protection from the ſtate, is bound to return it when occaſion offers. How little ſenſe have we of this

ſocial affections. It renders us unfit for the functions of this mixt and various ſtate, where we muſt often converſe with bad men, and hardly meet with any character ſo clear, as to abide the teſt of an exact and rigorous review.

obligation, when thro' cowardice, negligence, or ill-judg'd tenderneſs, we let looſe upon our country the diſturbers of its peace and order? How little knowledge have we of our own intereſts, when we refuſe to concur in ſuch acts as are neceſſary to the common ſecurity?

One of the reaſons which obliges individuals to defend the ſtate is, the benefits they derive from it. Certainly therefore the defence of our own rights and perſons cannot be prohibited, but may be undertaken without any breach of benevolence, or the leaſt tincture of a vindictive or litigious ſpirit. When the Apoſtle condemns this temper in another place; and when in the words of the text, he forbids his followers to avenge *themſelves*; it cannot be his meaning, that they ſhould *renounce* the protection of the civil power; but be *contented* with that protection; and, for ſuch offences as demand it, ſhou'd ſeek ſatisfaction in a legal and regular way. It is not the purpoſe of the Goſpel, by enforcing the law of charity, to overturn the rules of juſtice. However,

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even Heathens were ſenſible, that, in the endleſs variety of caſes which exiſt, an *invariable* and *rigorous* application of its rules, muſt weaken its foundations, and bring on the very evils it is meant to redreſs. There are men, who make it a rule, never to abate any thing of their legal claims, and never to do more than the law compels them to do. But all who have the leaſt regard for virtue, ſhould make it a rule, never to have any commerce with ſuch wretches, when it is poſſible to avoid it.

INDEED the directions of the Apoſtle relate chiefly to that claſs of injuries, which are of a private nature; and, tho' too minute and inconſiderable to fall under the inſpection of laws, yet, render'd important either by their own circumſtances, or by the fancy and feelings of the ſufferer, are often productive of public and extenſive miſchiefs, when he has not greatneſs enough to overlook or forgive them, nor candor enough to ſubmit them to the judgment of others.

But ſuppoſing they are ſuch as cannot be refer'd, and ought not be overlook'd; how are we to act, what rule muſt we follow? This indeed is a pertinent enquiry, that demands a fair and ingenuous anſwer.

It is ſcarce neceſſary to obſerve, that no community can ſubſiſt without ſome ſort of laws. *Private and familiar intercourſe* forms a kind of ſeparate republic, which has laws of its own, diſtinct from thoſe of the ſtate, tho' influenc'd by them. Now the only ſanction or ſupport of the rules of this leſſer ſociety, is private reſentment, which, in default of the public, returns to its office, and reſumes its rights. A reaſon why it may be allowable here, to reſume, for a moment, the conſideration of this principle; which, by a prompt and juſt diſcrimination of characters, manifeſts and maintains the important diſtinctions, otherwiſe liable to be loſt or confounded: I mean, thoſe moral diſtinctions, that give ſecurity to all government, and to *this ſtate* its eaſe and happineſs. With-draw from the injurious and ill-bred

that confidence, reſpect, and eſteem, which are the rewards of civility. With-hold from the wicked and worthleſs all ſuch favors as do not fall under the ſtrict claims of humanity. Thus far, your reſentment is regular and rational. More than this can hardly be neceſſary, and is always hazardous. Revenge has no rule of judging, and but one rule of acting; — to do as much miſchief as poſſible; a rule, by which it often aſſigns to faults beneath the notice of laws, the higheſt puniſhments they ever inflict for the higheſt crimes. Sometimes the force of particular paſſions is unfortunately augmented by the influence of opinion. There are certain habits of thinking that have long ſurviv'd the romantic inſtitution on which they were founded. There are certain vices connected with them. Before theſe can be effectually ſuppreſs'd, thoſe habits of the mind muſt be conquer'd. And why are they not? Their ſubſiſtence is inexplicable. Their power is a ſtanding prodigy. After the vaſt improvements in every branch of ſcience, and the growth of civility, now

matur'd and perfected by the aſſiſtance of reform'd religion, who would believe, that a cuſtom, which was one of the worſt inventions of a barbarous age, ſhould continue the reproach of the moſt civiliz'd; — a cuſtom, which in defiance of divine and human laws, has even interdicted forgiveneſs, and erected revenge into a maxim. Out of that formidable band of prevailing errors, which diſgrac'd the common ſenſe of mankind, there remains not one more fatal. Yet remain it *muſt*, unleſs it ſhall pleaſe God to move the hearts of the truly brave, to rid the world of that Idol of honor, which the raſh, and not the brave, have exalted to a Divinity; — a Demon it ſhould rather ſeem, that prompts men to commit the moſt inexpiable crimes in order to ſatisfy the ſhadow of an injury.

One would think the wrath of man might be contented with a leſs attonement, than that of human ſacrifices. Even among *Heathens*, and as offer'd to the offended *Deity*, they fill us with horror and aſtoniſhment.

So

So glaring a contradiction to all the ſentiments of nature, nothing can account for, but a religion, which totally miſtook the duties of man, and perfections of the Deity; — repreſenting the all-gracious Creator and common parent as vindictive and hard to be appeas'd. This was the baſis, on which the grand fabric of ſuperſtition was erected. It might therefore be imagin'd, that a teacher from heaven would inſtantly cruſh with the whole weight of his authority, an opinion ſo big with abſurdity, and ſo deſtructive of true piety. And this he hath done. There is ſcarce a page in the Goſpel of Jeſus, but what contains the cleareſt and ſtrongeſt declarations of God's love. It is the law of his providence, the rule of all his diſpenſations. Even the ſeeming exceptions to this rule, are proofs of its univerſality: the moſt tremendous inſtances of his ſeverity to particular perſons or nations, ſerving only to illuſtrate his mercy and goodneſs to all men.

In like manner, evil is inflicted by *human* governors, for *beneficent* ends; — only to remove or prevent ſome greater evil.

The civil Magiſtrate is the legal avenger of all ſuch offences, as affect the peace of ſociety. The importance, the dignity, the delicacy of his office, demand a rare aſſemblage of virtues and talents. It is highly honourable in every view, — and highly diſtreſsful it muſt be, were he not reliev'd by the benevolent temper of our laws; — very moderate in the puniſhments they ordain; rigorous only in the proofs they require. Where ſuch a temper is wanting, as in deſpotic governments, crimes are not leſs frequent, and they are uſually more atrocious. The commonneſs of terrible ſpectacles enfeebles the impreſſions of terror. It renders men more daring, and deſperate. It tends to impair one of the beſt affections of the human mind, and gradually introduces in its room a kind of ſottiſh and brutal inſenſibility. With *generous* natures, the high ſenſe of ſhame endur'd on the one hand,

hand, and the indignation publicly and ſolemnly expreſs'd on the other, will have more weight than all the ſtudied inventions of refin'd cruelty. With *us*, the *higheſt* puniſhments, if not diſpens'd with the utmoſt frugality, are yet conducted with tenderneſs. The manner alſo of proceeding is deliberate and cautious. Every poſſible opportunity of defence is afforded to the criminal. Even after the ſad ſentence is pronounc'd, — if there be any *room* for clemency; if it be warranted by the leaſt favourable circumſtance; if it can be obtain'd without weakening the main ſprings of government; the reſpect and reverence that are due to the laws; the Prince is ever ready to exert it: happy in the exerciſe of that glorious prerogative, which reſcues a wretch from the horrors of deſpair; which reſtores to himſelf a ſubject, and to the ſtate a citizen.

To conclude. The power and right of avenging, is lodg'd in the hands of the ſupreme

preme Governor, or of his appointed delegates and vice-gerents. To uſurp this power, to appropriate this right, in order to ſerve the low purpoſes of paſſion, is one of thoſe preſumptuous ſins, which good men dread and deprecate. We are no more at liberty to puniſh for ourſelves, than we are to make laws for ourſelves.

THERE ought to be but one ſword unſheath'd, and that the ſword of juſtice; as, according to ſome, there ſhould be but one religion in a ſtate, — and that the religion of the Magiſtrate. Happily, the religion of the Magiſtrate with *us*, and that of the Goſpel, are exactly the ſame: the pureſt ſyſtem of worſhip conſpiring with the moſt perfect conſtitution of government. Let us teſtify our devout ſenſe of ſuch benefits, by the beſt uſe and improvement of them. Let us cultivate thoſe bleſſings which are the end of both, harmony and peace. Neither private nor public happineſs can conſiſt with an unreſtrain'd indulgence of our reſentments.

reſentments. Let us meekly and pi-ouſly commit them to God and the ſtate. In all reaſon we ought. While Chriſtianity commands us to forgive our enemies, the laws take from them the power to hurt us.

FINIS.

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